

Slovak society

Vladimir Bohinc, Life of Subjects in Tekov County in the 18th Century, Naše rodina, 17:2 (June 2005) 47-53.

3 main farming groups:

1. Farmers: house, horses or oxen with wagons
2. Tenants: house, no work animals
3. Subtenants: lived with farmers or tenants

Farmers & tenants made up the community of subjects of the landlord, the real and absolute land owner. The farmers of the community usually elected the mayor; occasionally tenants were involved. Farmers used over 90% of the land, land that was inheritable by the eldest son, but land that was really owned by the landlord.

Arable land was divided into 3 types:

1. Urbarial: cultivated by farmers based on inheritance law; 'ownership' conditioned on satisfying landlords duties; rent paid in natural goods &/or \$; landlords began farming their lands in greater % in 15th & 16th C, taking land back from farmers.
2. Extirpatorial (Kopanice): cleared (wooded) land and less desirable land, required landlord's permission; curtailed in 18th C to preserve wooded lands. Ownership was 'looser' than urbarial lands based on verbal contract or "Custom Law" – inheritable, 'owners' paid rent, lands could be retaken by landlord for paying cultivation costs.
3. Dominical: owned and used by landlords, sometimes allowed servants to use it in exchange for services or rent.

Nobility was exempt from taxes so the State had an interest in keeping farmers and tenants in possession of their lands, urbarial and extirpatorial.

Pastures and meadows: draft animals required large amounts of hay, usually 25% of land was for hay. Extirpatorial land usually had a larger % of meadowlands for hay. Land usually went from wooded > cleared/extirpatorial > plowed/urbarial with additional clearing of wooded land for meadows. Cattle put to pasture from April until winter to save on hay required (?). Community pastures used by landlord and subjects supplemented individual pastures.

Woods: extremely important, owned by landlords who defined use precisely. King's Chamber responsible for planting new trees and overall "rational" use.

Gardens: associated with each house, intravilan – cabbage, onions, garlic, carrots, peas, lentils & beans, flax & hemp; 80-100 fruit trees, mostly apples and pears. Versus extravilan – everything outside of village.

Landlords owned breweries, distilleries, mills and factories. Landlord's economic goals were tied to the economic success of their subjects. Holding urbarial land was not an expression of ownership but one of right to use the land. Gave rights to others, such as operating a mill or saloon.

Rent example for $\frac{1}{4}$ farm (?):

1 chicken per month, 2 geese per year and $\frac{1}{10^{\text{th}}}$ of a pig per year (i.e. 1 pig/10 farmers) plus $\frac{1}{9^{\text{th}}}$ of crop; plus "1 Golden coin" from each holder of a $\frac{1}{4}$ farm and from each tenant; each "holder of a $\frac{1}{4}$ farm" had to work with his horses and tools 1 day/week; those without horses had to work "2 days on foot" – also each farmer had to "absolve two long tours with horses each year" or buy out duty with 30 Golden coins.

The Robota or statutory labor averaged 52 days/year with horses or 104 on foot for farmers; 18 days per year for tenants and 12 days per year for subtenants.

Church had a 'right' to $\frac{1}{10^{\text{th}}}$ of all crops, hence bishop/landlord combinations were lucrative.